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BOOK REVIEWS

Africa and the Discovery of America. Volume I. By LEO WIENER, Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at Harvard University. Innes & Sons, Philadelphia, Pa., 1920. Pp. i-xix, 1-290.

The present volume is the first of a series in which Professor Wiener will show that Arabicised Negroes, chiefly Mandingoes, brought to America as slaves, profoundly influenced the culture of the Indians, and were an important, if not always direct factor in establishing the *modus vivendi* between the Indians and the Europeans, which made practicable the colonization of the New World.

The book is packed with valuable data, newly discovered, and brought together for the first time. It should be read slowly, and read through at least twice before judgment is passed on it. With the first reading comes a shock. One learns that the *Journal of the First Voyage*, and the *First Letter of Columbus* are literary frauds, though containing material which came from Columbus's own pen, and that tobacco, manioc, yams, sweet potatoes and peanuts are not gifts of the Indian to the European. Yet with a more intimate study of the subject matter, the conviction increases that the author has built upon the bed-rock of fact, and that his position is unassailable.

It is impossible, within the limits of a review, to do more than to emphasise the most important of his discoveries. In his studies of the *First Letter*, and of the *Journals* giving account of the first and the second voyages of Columbus, Professor Wiener seeks to determine how much testimony they give pertaining to Indian names and things, after the elimination of all that is not Indian. The non-Indian elements are of two sorts; the names of the Islands, and the words for "gold," etc. Columbus, dominated by the fixed idea, that, sailing westward, he would find a short cut to India, China and Japan, began with the first sight of land, to be engrossed with the task of identifying each newly discovered country with some island or district of the Far East, named on his maps. He was an ignorant man, though he knew Ptolemy and Marco Polo by heart, credulous, uncritical, not consciously dishonest, but unready to correct false impressions caused by his

ignorance and gullibility. His notes, as may be seen from a reproduction of a page of his manuscripts (facing p. 38), were in an execrable hand. The forger of the *Journal of the First Voyage* was no puzzle expert, and made mistakes in deciphering scrawls. Thus, for example, the note *Giaua min.*, i.e., Java minor, was read *Guanahin*, the same destined to masquerade as *Guanahani*, the Indian name of the first island sighted on October 12, 1492.

Perhaps the best specimen of such ghost-words in the *Journal* is the name *Carib*. This is nothing but Marco Polo's *Cambalu*, the capital of the Grand Khan, successively misread as Canibal, Caniba, Cariba. So also, "canoe" is a ghost-word, traced to a misreading of *scaphas* as *canoas* in the manuscript, or the Gothic text of the Latin version of the First Letter. It is interesting to learn that *maize*, in the forms *masa*, *maza*, ultimately from Portuguese *mararoca*, is the African name for Guinea corn. The transference of the name from Guinea corn to Indian corn, "rests on a misunderstanding of a passage in Peter Martyr's *First Decade*" (p. 123).

The question arises whether or not there had been a colony of Europeans, with African slaves in America, before the arrival of Columbus.

Fray Ramon Pane, Oviedo, and Las Casas give *conico* as the Indian word for "farm, plantation." This is clearly the Mandingo *kunke* "farm." The Indian word for "gold," according to the *Journal* entry for January 13, 1493, is *caona*. It is found also in the name of *Cacique Caonabo*, called in the *Journal of the Second Voyage* "master of mines,"—the name being explained in the *Libretto* as "lord of the house of gold." Now the words for "gold" in the Negro languages are mostly derived from Arabic *dinār*, which, through Hausa *zinaria*, and Pul *kanyera*, reaches Vei as *kani*. Evidently *canoa*, written also *guani*, is nothing but this Vei word. In "Cacique Caonabo," we have three Mande words in juxtaposition. *Cacique* is not far removed from *kuntigi*, Soso *kundzi*, "chief,"—*caona*, that is *kani*, is "gold," and *boi*, from Arabic *beii*, *bai*, is "house." The chance that three such words should be identical in the dissimilar languages of Africa and America, is *nil*. The words are African, though represented as belonging to the spoken language of the New World. Moreover, Ramon Pane, in the account he wrote for Columbus of the Indian religion, gives as Indian words, the Mande *toto*, "frog," and the

Malinke *kobo*, "bug." What is more important, he imputes to the Indians, a knowledge of the terrible West African itch, or *craworaw*, which he calls by the supposed Indian name *caracaracol*. The critic faces a dilemma. Either Ramon Pane lied, or he told the truth. Either he fabricated stories of Indians, which he drew from books or manuscript relations by Spanish and Portuguese traders, who were writing about Negroes in Africa, or there had been in Hispaniola, a pre-Columbian colony of European adventurers, with their African slaves, who taught the Indians the Negro words for "farm, gold, frog, bug, itch," etc., and also African folk-lore. No other hypothesis is possible.

The documentary and philological history of tobacco smoking and the cultivation of edible roots, shows additional convincing evidence of the influence of Africa on the culture of America in the colonial period. Columbus never saw the Indians smoking tobacco. According to the *Journal of the First Voyage*, on October 15, 1492, an Indian brought him a ball of earth and certain precious dried leaves. On November 16, two Spaniards reported that the Indians, carrying firebrands and leaves, used them to "take incense." In the *Journal of the Second Voyage*, Columbus (this part of the Journal is definitely ascribed to him by his son) writes of Indians spreading powder on a table, and sniffing it through a forked reed, thereby becoming intoxicated. Now the first account is suspiciously like a book-story of Oriental hashish-taking,—the second has no implication of smoking at all, while the third describes nothing but the process of taking a sternutatory. Indeed this last account is clearly based on a book account, in which there was a play on the Arabic words *tubbāq* "styptic" and *tabaq* "table." Ramon Pane, when he tells of Indians sniffing the powder, calls it *caboba*, a mere Italianisation of the Arabic *qasabah* "reed," transferring the name of the inhaler to the drug. Smoking tobacco through a forked reed of the sort described, has been proved by trial, to be impossible. As late as 1535, Oviedo is unable to tell a straightforward story of Indians smoking tobacco, but he adds the significant fact that the Negroes in the West Indies smoked and cultivated tobacco. Negroes, by the way were first allowed to come to America in 1501,—two years later, Ovando, the governor of Hispaniola complained that they joined with the Indians to make trouble. By 1545, "smoking had become fairly universal in America" (p. 127). It cannot be argued that half a

century is too short a time for a new vice to become so widespread. Consider the case of banana culture. Oviedo says that the first bananas were introduced into America in 1516. Within twenty years, the fruit was universally cultivated, while the Spanish name *platano* has survived in a large number of derivatives in the Indian languages.

As far as the linguistic history of the tobacco-words in the Indian languages is concerned, it leads back to an eastern origin. In Arabic, *tubbāq* means "styptic." Tobacco leaves were used as a styptic by the Indians of Brazil in the sixteenth century. The Low Latin equivalent of the Arabic *tubbāq* "styptic," is *bitumen*, whence Portuguese *betume*, and French *betun*, *petun*. "The French traders," says Professor Wiener, "at the end of the sixteenth century, carried the word and the Brazilian brand of tobacco to Canada, and *petun* became imbedded in several Indian languages. The older Huron word for "tobacco" is derived from the Carib *yuli*, which itself is from a Mandingo word. Thus, while the Carib and Arawak influence is apparent in the direction from Florida, to the Huron country, the Brazilian influence proceeds up the St. Lawrence. The whole Atlantic triangle between these two converging lines was left uninfluenced by these two streams, and here, neither Carib nor Brazilian words for "tobacco," nor the moundbuilders' craft have been found. Here the "tobacco" words proceeded northward from Virginia, where the oldest form of the words is an abbreviated Span. *tabaco*, or Fr. *tabao* (p. 191). The Carib *yuli* "smoke," is found in Carib and Arawak, side by side with derivatives of Mande *tama*, *tawa*, which are also in the Algonkian languages. The fact that the Hurons, apparently the first Indians to plant tobacco, have no native word for the plant is significant. It shows that the Hurons learned to smoke from the Arawaks or Caribs, then already under Negro influence, and at a time prior to the introduction of the tobacco-plant into Canada by the French. When we consider, then, that tobacco is native to Africa, that *tubbāq* and *petun* are the ancestors of the Indian names for the weed, that by 1503, Negroes in large numbers were living in America, deserting their masters to join the Indians, that the Negroes in America smoked and raised tobacco, the conclusion is inescapable that tobacco smoking was discovered and taught by them to the Indians and the Europeans.

"The tobacco-pipe in America," says Professor Wiener, "began

its career as a Mandingo amulet" (p. 184). This statement will distress the American archæologists, but the arguments in support of it cannot be overcome. A counter-claim of pre-Columbian antiquity for pipes found in the mounds cannot be made, since it is so clearly shown that the mounds are not prehistoric, but were fortifications erected along the lines of communication from Florida to the Huron country, to protect the overland trade established in the beginning of the sixteenth century.

In the *Journal of the First Voyage*, we find mention of *ajes* and *niames*, as name of edible roots, but the account hopelessly confuses reports of yams, sweet potatoes and manioc. Neither yams nor sweet potatoes are native to America, and both bear in America, only African names. Oviedo indeed, says distinctly, that the name is "a foreign fruit, and not native to these Indies,"—also, that "it came with that evil lot of Negroes, . . . of whom there is a greater number than is necessary, on account of their rebellions" (pp. 203–4). Now in Africa the yam (*Dioscorea*), cultivated before the coming of the Europeans, is known by names derived from Arabic *arum* and *gambah*, e.g., Ewe *adě*, *adže*, Mandingo *nyambe*, Malinke *nyeme ku*,—whence the supposed Indian names, *aje*, *age*, *niame*, *igname*, used indiscriminately of any edible roots. The African names of the manioc have come from Arabic '*uruq* "roots," notably in the Congo languages, *yōka*, *yēke*, *edioko*, plural *madioka*, whence, as the plant was introduced into America, it was known there as *vuca*, *mandioca*. As to sweet potatoes and peanuts, the former were cultivated in Asia before the discovery of America, while the latter, mentioned by Ibn Batutah as an article of food in Africa, took to the New World, their African names *mandube*, *goober* and *pinder* (compare Mozambique *manduwe*, Basunde *nguba*, Nyombo *pinda*). Professor Wiener's conclusion is that manioc culture was taught to the Brazilian Indians before 1492 by Portuguese castaways, who knew of the economic importance of the plant in Africa, while the peanut, spreading north and south from the Antilles, may also have reached America a few years before Columbus.

The numerous full-page illustrations are extremely helpful in aiding the reader to a clear understanding of difficult points in the discussion.

The book is epoch-making. To all seekers of the truth, the coming of the second volume, in which Professor Wiener will deal

exhaustively with the Negro element in Indian culture, will be an eagerly anticipated event.

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CAMBRIDGE MASSACHUSETTS

A Comparative Study of the Bantu and Semi-Bantu Languages.

By SIR HARRY H. JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., D.Sc. (Cambs).

Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1919, pp. 815, 2 sketch maps.

The author of this monumental work, in the opinion of the reviewer, is in himself a composite of many of the capacities, which, combined or singly in her subjects have made the greatness of Britain. He has been a great colonial administrator, a distinguished African explorer; he is a talented artist, and has recently astonished the literary world by producing what H. G. Wells declares to be one of the best first novels he has ever read. The contributions of Sir Harry Johnston to the sciences of botany, zoology, and anthropology are truly prodigious. It is in the last named field that his major interests have lain, and a succession of important works have established him as the foremost authority upon the ethnology of Africa and upon the anthropology of the Negro race.

This ponderous volume on the Bantu and Semi-Bantu languages is the first part of a work which represents the fruit of many years of study of multitudinous African languages and dialects. The major portion of the book consists of illustrative vocabularies of 366 Bantu and 87 Semi-Bantu languages and dialects with an extensive bibliography. A competent criticism of this portion of the work can be made by no one but a philologist with a special knowledge of African languages. The present reviewer does not possess these qualifications. Nevertheless it is obvious to any student of Africa that the publication of this work places a mine of useful information at the disposal of the linguist, the grammarian, and the missionary, and will also be invaluable to the student of African ethnology and to the physical anthropologist.

The first chapter sketches the history of research into the Bantu languages. The contributions of various philosophists are appraised.

The second chapter on the distribution and character of the Bantu languages is of greatest interest to the layman and to the general anthropologist. We are informed that the Bantu